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SUBJECT: (U) GOTTEMOELLER-NYKONENKO LUNCH, FEBRUARY 3, 2010

CLASSIFIED BY: Rose A. Gottemoeller, Assistant Secretary, Department
of State, VCI; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

SUMMARY

1. (S) At a U.S.-hosted lunch on February 3 on the margins of the START Follow-on negotiations in Geneva, Assistant Secretary Gottemoeller met with the Ukrainian Director of Arms Control and Military and Technical Cooperation, Ambassador Aleksandr Nykonenko. Nykonenko inquired as to the progress of the START Follow-on negotiations. He pressed for security assurances and noted concerns in Ukraine regarding Russia's ambitions. Nykonenko asked Gottemoeller's advice on a proposal by Ukraine to meet with the P5 members just prior to the kick-off of the Nuclear Security Summit in April. Gottemoeller said the United States recognized the important and positive role Ukraine continued to play in the nonproliferation arena and asked about Ukraine's response at the summit regarding its highly enriched uranium (HEU). Nykonenko expressed his concern about the suspension of Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE). Gottemoeller took the opportunity to inform him that the Secretary of State had just named Ambassador Victoria Nuland as Special Envoy for CFE. Gottemoeller told Nykonenko Washington was positive toward Ukraine moving in a sound political and economic direction. End summary.

2. (S) SUBJECT SUMMARY: How Long Until it is Finished?; Ukraine's Security Assurances-Top Priority; Nuclear Security Summit and Ukraine; An Ambitious Russia; and Security Assurances Redux.

HOW LONG UNTIL IT IS FINISHED?

13. (S) At a U.S.-hosted lunch on February 3 on the margins of the START Follow-on negotiations, Nykonenko inquired as to the progress of the negotiations and when they might be finished. Gottemoeller said that the negotiations had reconvened on February 1, after a short strategic pause in January and that she was measuring the time to complete the negotiations and sign the treaty in weeks, not months. Nykonenko took the opportunity to offer Kyiv as a logical location for the signing of the new treaty. There was already a Washington Treaty and a Moscow Treaty. As Ukraine had contributed to the process of reductions, it would send a very positive signal to all to have such a ceremony in Kyiv. Gottemoeller thanked Nykonenko for the offer and said she would reflect on it.

UKRAINE'S SECURITY ASSURANCES--TOP PRIORITY

14. (S) Nykonenko volunteered that he had met with Russian Ambassador Antonov the day prior and had raised the issue of security assurances. He reported that Antonov had been rather reserved and said that were Russia to give new security assurances to Ukraine it would confirm that a threat existed. Making the same request of Gottemoeller, Nykonenko said that Ukraine needed such security assurances since there was much concern with the actions by the Russian Duma regarding the possible use of nuclear arms in nearby countries. Gottemoeller said she had seen some press accounts about Russia's new nuclear doctrine and asked Nykonenko whether he had seen the document. Responding "yes, of course," Nykonenko moved on to statements in the Romanian press about Ukraine stealing ethnic Romanian property and that Ukraine was not really a state and should be managed by Russia. Gottemoeller noted that Romania was a member state of NATO which could be expected to respect other nations' territorial integrity. Nykonenko said he understood, but that there was much concern in Ukraine that it was dependent on others. Ukraine was looking for security assurances to calm the tension. Gottemoeller asked whether NATO membership had come up in the Presidential election. Nykonenko said that this issue had been avoided. NATO was 5-8 years away.

15. (S) Gottemoeller noted that Russia had recently posted an ambassador to Ukraine and that dialogue was beginning to open up. This should be a good signal for Ukraine's leadership, she said. Nykonenko said this was a positive step. He thanked Gottemoeller for the December 4 U.S.-Russia Joint Statement on Ukraine's participation in the successful implementation of START. He added it was curious to some that the United States gave collective assurances to NATO countries and Belarus and Kazakhstan received assurances from Russia through the Confederation of Independent States. Ukraine was not in a block and thus was vulnerable.

16. (S) Gottemoeller asserted that for the United States there was no change in its security assurances to Ukraine. The United States felt it important to reiterate the assurances by sending Vice President Biden to deliver that same message in July 2009. Additionally, there had been no difference between the United States and Russia on this message. We had been very consistent, she said. Gottemoeller underscored the important and positive role in nonproliferation Ukraine had played and hoped Ukraine's policies would remain the same. Nykonenko stated emphatically "yes," and asserted that Ukraine and the United States were strategic

partners.

NUCLEAR SECURITY SUMMIT AND UKRAINE

¶7. (S) Nykonenko requested Gottemoeller's advice on a proposal his foreign minister was considering regarding the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington in April. Ukraine would like to meet with the other Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council

perhaps before the kick-off to the Summit on April 12 to discuss security assurances. His foreign minister would be calling the ambassadors of the P5 to explore this proposal. Gottemoeller asked whether this would be a meeting of the Presidents. Nykonenko demurred and said he was looking for ideas. Ukraine just wanted to feel that it was not outside the nuclear group. Ukraine needed an anchor for the next 5 to 10 years and was looking to the United States for help to persuade Russia to temper its ambitions.

AN AMBITIOUS RUSSIA

¶8. (S) There were over a million Russian troops and pieces of military equipment that were outside of treaty limitations with Russia's suspension of the CFE Treaty, Nykonenko said. Ukraine was in a new period of foreign policy. Given concerns about gas supplies and economic issues along with CFE concerns, Ukraine was dealing with an ambitious Russia.

¶9. (S) Gottemoeller took the opportunity to inform Nykonenko that the Secretary of State had named Ambassador Victoria Nuland as Special Envoy for Conventional Armed Forces in Europe on February 12. Nuland's focus would be on conventional arms control in Europe and these issues should certainly be raised with her. Nykonenko asked whether Gottemoeller had held any consultations with Russia on the CFE issue. Gottemoeller said that most of her time had been focused on completing the negotiations for the START Follow-on treaty and that the CFE talks had been on hold. With Ambassador Nuland's appointment these discussions should begin anew.

SECURITY ASSURANCES REDUX

¶10. (S) Nykonenko returned to the issue of security assurances, saying that Ukraine would like to be invited to a round of negotiations on the issue involving also the United States and Russia. Ukraine had a big border with Russia, over 2000 kilometers, and was feeling unprotected. A trilateral statement among the United States, Russia, and Ukraine on security assurances would be understood by everyone and would send a positive signal. It would help to ease the tensions created by statements coming out of Romania. Gottemoeller reminded Nykonenko of the December 4, 2009, U.S.- Russian Joint Statement confirming the U.S. and Russian assurances recorded in the Budapest Summit Memorandum. Nykonenko said that maybe there needed to be another summit. Gottemoeller

suggested that there were many opportunities for Ukraine to hold security dialogues. Ukraine's upcoming Presidential inaugural would be an excellent opportunity. Ukraine's participation in the Partnership for Peace was another excellent venue. Nykonenko said

that Ukraine had tried to participate with the British in working on a repair contract for helicopters, but its participation was blocked by the Czech Republic because of Russia's influence. There were many consequences of Russia's influence. Russia is very sensitive to Ukraine's desire to participate with other countries. When Ukraine feels dependent on others it is painful and indicative of a lack of security. Ukraine is looking for leverage to equalize its position vis a vis Russia, Romania and NATO. Ukraine is a big country, he concluded.

¶11. (S) Gottemoeller said that Washington was very energized and positive about working toward sound political and economic cooperation with Ukraine. Washington was looking to understand what Ukraine needed and wanted in a reenergized relationship. Gottemoeller reiterated that the existing security assurances were consistent with this approach. The United States and Ukraine had a relationship along several trajectories, NATO, bilateral, and the security dialogue in November. There were many ways to pursue opportunities and to build understanding. Nykonenko asked when Ukraine could expect a response to its letter of November to President Obama. Gottemoeller said that she was aware that a response was being prepared and that she would inquire as to its status.

¶12. (S) Gottemoeller inquired as to what Ukraine's response was likely to be at the Nuclear Security Summit regarding its HEU, noting that Ukraine had been deliberating for some time on the issue. Nykonenko said that a decision would be taken by the new President; however, there would likely not be a statement about withdrawal of the HEU. Ukraine was ready to start the withdrawal at the Kyiv Institute, but the problem was financing. Russia was asking for one million USD to assist in the withdrawal process. There would be meeting with Acting Assistant Secretary Vann Van Diepen in March and Ukraine would be seeking U.S. assistance. Such help would again be a good signal. Ukraine would be ready to work on the spent fuel problem, which would be a positive step.

¶13. (S) Nykonenko thanked Gottemoeller for the opportunity to discuss his concerns and invited Gottemoeller to visit Kyiv. Gottemoeller thanked Nykonenko and offered that she was keen to come to Kyiv, saying she would consider it as soon as possible.

¶14. (S) Gottemoeller sends.
LARSON